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FM AMEMBASSY MASERU

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2856

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0075

INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

RUEHMR/AMEMBASSY MASERU 3209

UNCLAS MASERU 000211

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SENSITIVE

FOR ISN/MTR - JOHN PAUL HERMANN; AF/S - DAN MOZENA AND LINDA MUNCY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [MTCRE](#) [KSCA](#) [LT](#)

SUBJECT: HCOC: LESOTHO'S RESPONSE

REF: (A) STATE 42280 (B) 06 MASERU 198

This is an action message. See para. 2.

¶1. (SBU) Ambassador delivered reftel talking points concerning the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) on Missile Non-Proliferation to Lesotho's new Minister of Foreign Affairs Kenneth Tsekao on April 4, although they had been delivered as previously noted in Ref (B). Tsekao found the specific example of how the note verbale should be delivered very useful. He did say that in terms of the content of the message, he did not see a problem. However, he asked the Acting Principal Secretary to have the legal division within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs review the HCOC and make a recommendation to him after their review. The Ambassador explained that this issue had been brought to the attention of Tsekao's predecessor (Monyane Moleleki) in April 2006, and it was our understanding that there was not any inherent objection from the Government of Lesotho to the content of the Code of Conduct. But there had never been the appropriate follow up, either from Moleleki nor from any of their representatives in Europe to our knowledge. Tsekao, in reviewing the 126 countries that support the principles of the Missile Technology Control Regime, noted that a number of countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region were already adherents to the Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). We discussed the fact that Lesotho is not a ballistic missile country and, therefore, the Government of Lesotho (GOL), in subscribing to the HCOC, would not require actions specific to some other countries. In fact, it would not impose financial burden on the country. Post will follow up with the new Foreign Minister in the near future to ascertain whether or not he has received a response from his legal division.

¶2. (SBU) Comment: Post recognizes that the current Minister of Foreign Affairs is taking over a portfolio that has substantially changed since he previously served in that position. At the same time, the lack of follow-up by the previous Foreign Minister is disappointing since Lesotho has generally been a supporter of international conventions and policies concerning peace and security. Simultaneously, while following up here, we request that the USUN delegation engage Lesotho's Permanent Representative, Fine Maema, also on this issue. Since his March 2 swearing-in, Tsekao has responded, in at least one case, within 24 hours to our request and we certainly hope that his response on the HCOC position will be prompt as well. Although the timing cannot be predicted, we have found that Tsekao has attempted to be responsive despite the past election disturbances by the opposition and despite the demands placed on him as Foreign Minister in dealing with SADC on both the situation in Lesotho and Zimbabwe. We will keep Department informed on this request. End Comment.

PERRY